

Mr Andris Piebalgs,  
Commissioner for Development  
European Commission  
Rue de la Loi 200  
B-1049, Brussels  
BELGIQUE

Paris, October 15th 2012

Dear Mr. Commissioner,

We are writing to express our concern at the absence of reference to culture or creative enterprise in the Agenda for Change, the framework document whose principles will be reflected in the European Union's future programming on development cooperation. In particular, it makes no reference to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and the Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, 2005, in spite of commitments made in the Lisbon Treaty and in the European Agenda for Culture, 2007.

The movement of European Coalitions for Cultural Diversity (ECCD) is the regional group of the International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity (IFCCD). The Federation brings together 43 coalitions, and over 600 cultural and creator organisations, to support the implementation of UNESCO's groundbreaking Convention, and to act as consultative, civil society partner to member states.

The Convention makes it obligatory on all signatories, of which the European Union is one, to maximise cooperation and exchange with the developing world, and Articles 13 – 16 address specific ways in which creative expressions can be strengthened by using cultural policy to achieve sustainable development goals.

Whilst many multilateral agencies recognise that culture plays an important role within democratic transition processes, supporting human rights and good governance, these principles are not always translated into coherent policy for action. This is the strength of the Convention and the advantage of its focus not on culture in general, but on diversity of expressions as a concrete, creative activity with both economic and cultural value.

... / ...

We therefore recommend that the Agenda for Change

- > develops policy priorities which benefit from and do not run counter to the articles of the Convention
- > assesses poverty and growth not simply in economic terms, by including indicators on cultural rights and access to the diversity of cultural expressions whether in education, health, trade, justice or communications policy
- > builds longterm support for the infrastructure of the creative industries and the means for disseminating cultural expressions

We hope that these perspectives might also be represented at the forthcoming meeting of Cultural Ministers from the ACP Countries, and attach a resolution on these issues, passed by the 3rd Congress of the International Federation in September 2012.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Santschi', with a small mark at the end of the line.

Beat Santschi  
Vice President Europe

Copy to :

Mr BARROSO, President of the European Commission

Ms Marie Paule ROUDIL, UNESCO Representative to the European Union

Ms Danielle CLICHE, Secretary of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, UNESCO ; Chief, Section of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

